(c) and (d) There has been an increase in firing along the Line of Control. During the one year period from 1 st April 1999 to 31 st March, 2000, 56 Indian Army personnel including 4 Officers were killed due to Pakistani firing/shelling along the Line of Control (excluding OP Vijay casualties).

Recruitment in defence forces

3976. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total recruitment of men from Tamil Nadu into defence forces during the last three years;

(b) what steps are being taken to recruit qualified men into defence forces from Tamil Nadu;

(c) whether any additional recruitment centres are to be brought up in rural areas to recruit youths; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) The total recruitment of soldiers in the Army from Tamil Nadu, during the last three years has been as under :

Year	Number recruited
1996-97	2845
1997-98	1936
1998-99	2490

The recruitment of sailors in Navy and airmen in Air Force is carried out on all-India merit basis and there is no specific quota allotted to a State.

(b) Regular recruitment rallies are held in the state for recruitment to the Army. It is ensured that the whole area of the State is covered during a recruitment year.

(c) and (d) With the introduction of the new recruitment policy with effect from 1st April, 1998, all recruitments are made through open rallies and the role of recruiting offices is limited to planning and administrative activities. As such there is no proposal to open new recruitment office anywhere in the country.